



**PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL
KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMAN – 2ND DISTRICT**

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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**Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, Mayor Nutter and Connor Barwin
to Break Ground on Ralph Brooks Tot Lot Improvements**

PHILADELPHIA – November 6, 2014 – Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, Mayor Nutter, Deputy Mayor Michael DeBerardinis, Deputy Mayor & Managing Director Richard Negrin and Connor Barwin will break ground on renovations to the Ralph Brooks Tot Lot at 20th and Tasker Streets in South Philadelphia. The project is a partnership between Councilman Johnson, Urban Roots, I.am.SP, Connor Barwin's Make the World Better Foundation, The Philadelphia Water Department, the PhillyRising Collaborative Department of Parks and Recreation, State Representative Jordan Harris, and the Tasker Street Baptist Church. Plans are also underway with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the Mural Arts Program to bring urban farming and art to lots adjacent to the park.

"It is a statement that such a diverse group of partners have rallied around improving the Ralph Brooks Tot Lot," Councilman Johnson said. "This is an investment which will bring multi-generations of our community together around a multifaceted recreational space."

The project funding includes \$85,000 from Councilman Johnson's Office, \$85,000 from the Department of Parks and Recreation and \$162,000 from the Philadelphia Water Department, \$31,000 from Connor Barwin's Make the World Better Foundation, \$45,000 from the PhillyRising Collaborative and \$25,000 from Urban Roots and the 25th Century Foundation. Funds will go towards refurbishment and repaving of the basketball court, installation of a new play structure, a PWD rain garden and sidewalk improvements.

Connor Barwin invested in the project through his Make the World Better Foundation after noticing the park on his bike rides to and from practice.

"When I became an Eagle, I became a Philadelphian," Mr. Barwin said. "To me, that means caring about and investing in your community – which is the focus of the Make the World Better Foundation."

In addition to the exciting recreational and play equipment improvements at Ralph Brooks, the Philadelphia Water Department will install green stormwater infrastructure as part of the Green City, Clean Waters Plan. A subsurface trench beneath the basketball court and a rain garden will manage stormwater runoff from the site while also adding some green—trees, shrubs and flowers—to the site for the neighborhood to enjoy.

“These kinds of projects represent what is great about Philadelphia,” said Water Commissioner Howard Neukrug. “Philadelphia Water welcomes this opportunity to partner with City Council, the community, private foundations and other city agencies to showcase how green stormwater infrastructure can protect our environment and our valuable water resources while providing real benefit back to the community.”

The tot lot’s namesake, Ralph Brooks, will be in attendance for the groundbreaking. Mr. Brooks was an innocent bystander to a shooting in 1988 and was left paralyzed. The shooting galvanized the community and the park has carried his name as a symbol against violence in South Philadelphia.

Renovations will occur over the coming months, with a scheduled reopening planned for Spring 2015.

Who:

Councilman Kenyatta Johnson
Connor Barwin of the Philadelphia Eagles
Mayor Michael Nutter
Deputy Mayor – Managing Director Richard Negrin
Deputy Managing Director, PhillyRising Ade’ Fuqua
State Representative Jordan Harris
Philadelphia Water Department
Parks and Recreation
Jeffrey Tubbs and Claire Laver, Urban Roots
Jahmall Crandall, Iam.SP
Tasker Street Baptist Church
Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
Mural Arts Program

When:

Monday, November 17, 2014
3:30pm

Where:

Ralph Brooks Tot Lot
20th and Tasker Sts. Philadelphia

What:

Ceremonial Groundbreaking

Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, a former Pennsylvania State Representative, represents the 2nd Council District which includes parts of Center City, South Philadelphia, and Southwest Philadelphia.

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